

(NATIONAL HISTORIC
LANDMARKS)

Form 10-300
(July 1969)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE:

Oklahoma

COUNTY:

Cherokee

FOR NPS USE ONLY

ENTRY NUMBER

DATE

70-6-35-0004

1. NAME

COMMON:

Murrell Home

AND/OR HISTORIC:

Hunter's Home

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:

N/2 Sec. 22, T 16 N, R 22 E

CITY OR TOWN:

Park Hill (4 m. S of Tahlequah)

STATE

Oklahoma

CODE

35

COUNTY:

Cherokee

CODE

021

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY
(Check One)

- ☐ District ☒ Building
☐ Site ☐ Structure
☐ Object

OWNERSHIP

- ☒ Public
☐ Private
☐ Both

Public Acquisition:

- ☐ In Process
☐ Being Considered

STATUS

- ☐ Occupied
☒ Unoccupied
☐ Preservation work
in progress

ACCESSIBLE
TO THE PUBLIC

- Yes:
☒ Restricted
☐ Unrestricted
☐ No

PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- ☐ Agricultural ☐ Government ☐ Park ☐ Transportation ☐ Comments
☐ Commercial ☐ Industrial ☐ Private Residence ☐ Other (Specify) _____
☐ Educational ☐ Military ☐ Religious _____
☐ Entertainment ☒ Museum ☐ Scientific _____

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:

Parks Division, Industrial Dev. and Parks Dept., State of Oklahoma

STREET AND NUMBER:

500 Will Rogers Building

CITY OR TOWN:

Oklahoma City

STATE:

Oklahoma

CODE

35

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC:

Parks Division; State of Oklahoma

STREET AND NUMBER:

500 Will Rogers Building

CITY OR TOWN:

Oklahoma City

STATE

Oklahoma

CODE

35

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:

Murrell Home

DATE OF SURVEY:

1948

☐ Federal

☒ State

☐ County

☐ Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:

Parks Division, State of Oklahoma

STREET AND NUMBER:

500 Will Rogers Building

CITY OR TOWN:

Oklahoma City

STATE:

Oklahoma

CODE

35

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE:
Oklahoma

COUNTY:
Cherokee

ENTRY NUMBER

DATE

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7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Murrell Home is a well-built, well furnished two-story house that, while not overwhelming by ante-bellum standards in the established states of the South and East, must be rated as a legitimate "mansion" in the Indian country of eastern Oklahoma in 1843-1844 when it was built. Native stone was cut for its foundations. Native timber went into its studding and hand-hewn oak was used for lathing. But Major Murrell spared no expense in the finishing and furnishing of his Hunter's Home.

Windows, oak doors, pine flooring and siding were brought by river boat from New Orleans, along with furniture, nails, and hardware imported from France. The house boasted a large cellar for wines and vegetables, a smoke house for curing meats, and a spring house. Servants quarters were provided above the kitchen. A narrow two-story gallery in front lent a plain, but still genteelly formal "Southern" entrance to the mansion - in tribute to Murrell's Virginia background - but porches at side and back gave the house a comfortable, more informal appearance.

Since purchase by the State of Oklahoma in 1948 the white frame mansion has been restored to something approaching its former elegance. Fireplace facings have been cleaned and repaired, along with woodwork, doors, cabinets and floors. Walls have been cleaned, some new wallpaper hung. Through gifts of family members many of the original furnishings have been returned to high-ceilinged rooms of the two main floors of the mansion. An oil painting of Major Murrell hangs over the ornate fireplace of the formal parlor. In the same room is an oil portrait of Minerva Ross Murrell, the builder's first wife. (She died in a bedroom of the house in 1855, is now buried in the Ross Cemetery near by. In 1857 he married Amanda Ross, Minerva's sister. They had six children. Murrell and his second wife are buried in Lynchburg, Va., where he was born April 8, 1808.)

A huge stone fireplace dominates the kitchen and pantry areas. Authentic furnishings include a mantel clock, oaken bucket, iron hearth pieces, a sad iron, and a spinning wheel. Elsewhere in the home are such authentic period pieces as a John Petbeck piano (made in Connecticut in the 1850s), an Elias Ingraham clock (1857), and an 1830 Bible, purchased by Mary Jane Stapler as a gift for her sister, Sarah, when she married Chief John Ross in 1844. Among the valuable pieces of furniture are a Cherokee rosewood double bed and matching armoire; chest of drawers and sideboard in the downstairs bedroom; a rosewood sofa in the drawing room.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

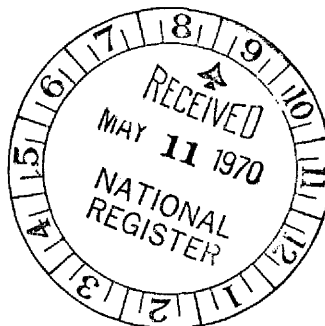
STATE Oklahoma	
COUNTY Cherokee	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
70-6-35-0004	6/22/70

(Number all entries)

No. 7 Description

Murrell Home

The re-creation is complete enough that a former curator, Mrs. Marguerite Clay Ross--herself a great grand niece of Henry Clay married to a great grandson of Chief John Ross--considered her position, not a job, but "an honor, a privilege and a pleasure. I can picture the Cherokee maidens descending the beautiful staircase to the parlors in the truly historic past of this place. I can feel the presence of men like Taylor, Lee and Davis, all of whom walked these very halls" Even those whose emotional ties to the old home and the period that produced it are not as close as those of Mrs. Ross cannot help but catch something of the same spirit of Hunter's Home as they roam its graciously restored rooms and well tended grounds.



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- ☐ Pre-Columbian | ☐ 16th Century | ☐ 18th Century | ☐ 20th Century
☐ 15th Century | ☐ 17th Century | ☒ 19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Education | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Political | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry | <input type="checkbox"/> Science | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture | _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Military | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | | |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

In the decade and a half before the Civil War, the Murrell Home was an impressive symbol of Indian courage and vision in the face of adversity. Today, it stands as almost the last remaining original vestige of the graciousness, even grandeur that the Indians succeeded in transplanting, briefly, from their old homeland in the Southeast to the raw frontier that was Indian Territory.

Here at the tragic end of the Trail of Tears, Cherokee leaders, sided for the most part by dedicated missionaries, attempted to rebuild their shattered culture. In 1836, the Rev. Samuel Austin Worcester established the Park Hill Mission here on a pleasant elevation near the Illinois River. Almost immediately the settlement became the center of life in this section of the Cherokee Nation. Worcester built homes for the missionaries and teachers, a boarding hall, and a grist mill. In 1837 he established the Park Hill Press and began publishing parts of the Bible, which he translated, using the "talking leaves" syllabus devised by Sequoyah some years earlier in present-day Georgia. His press also produced many religious tracts, school books, and the Cherokee Almanac. (A Cherokee-owned press in nearby Tahlequah produced Oklahoma's first newspaper, the Cherokee Advocate, this in 1844).

By 1846 the Cherokee National Council, meeting in Tahlequah, authorized establishment of two seminaries, or high schools. The Female Seminary was built at Park Hill, the Male Seminary a little closer to Tahlequah. Both were three-story brick affairs with massive columns and broad galleries that betrayed the southern heritage of their builders. Both opened their doors on May 7, 1861.

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Ballenger, T. J., "The Cultural Relations Between Two Pioneer Communities," The Chronicles of Oklahoma, Vol. XXXIV (Autumn, 1956), p. 286.

Foreman, Grant, The Five Civilized Tribes, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1934), p. 402.

Thetford, Francis, "Historic Heritage: Murrell Home," The Daily Oklahoman, Dec. 20, 1959.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			OR	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees	Minutes Seconds
NW	° ' "	° ' "		35° 50' 57"	94°	57' 51"
NE	° ' "	° ' "				
SE	° ' "	° ' "				
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: o. five acres

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: Kent Ruth

ORGANIZATION: Oklahoma Historical Society

STREET AND NUMBER: Historical Building

CITY OR TOWN: Oklahoma City

STATE: Oklahoma CODE: 35

DATE: April 1970

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National ☐ State ☒ Local ☐

This is new state furnished Anti Baller

Name: Ken Ruth

Title: Chairman for Oklahoma

Date: 4 May 1970

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

Walter Allen Connally
Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date: JUN 22 1970

ATTEST:

William J. Connelley
Keeper of the National Register

Date: JUN 3 1970

NO UTM
HL

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE	
Oklahoma	
COUNTY	
Cherokee	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
70-6-35-000 4	

(Number all entries)

No. 8 Significance - 2

Murrell Home

(Curiously enough, some Cherokee youngsters were thus studying Latin and Greek, if reluctantly, at a time when many of the whites on the frontier were unable to sign their name in any language.)

Park Hill was enjoying its brief reign as "The Athens of Indian Territory." It had become not only a religious and cultural center, but a social one as well. And here in 1844 and 1845, Major George M. Murrell--a son-in-law of Lewis Ross, brother of Chief John Ross, who had come to Oklahoma from Tennessee with the Cherokee - had decided to built his home.* A southerner and fond of the chase, he called his pleasant mansion Hunter's Home. Gracious and comfortable in design, furnishings, and atmosphere, it soon was a social center for Indians and whites over a large area. (Sam Houston was not the only soldier at nearby Fort Gibson who found the young Cherokee ladies attractive.)

Almost miraculously Hunter's Home seemed to lead a charmed life during the tragic Civil War years. It came through unscathed while Union and Confederate forces alternately raided and pillaged in the area. But the

*When a post office was established at Tahlequah May 6, 1847, Major Murrell was named postmaster. In 1849 he was operating a store in Tahlequah. In the June 25 Cherokee Advocate he was advertising "a new supply of spring, summer, and fall goods - new and fashionable prints, callicoes, check Stripes, Ginghams, Muslins, robes, silks, etc. Neatest and best summer wear for Gents, blue, brown, black and gray summer cloth, suitable for pants, etc. A superb lot of Gents and Ladies saddles and bridles, boots, shoes, etc. And a great many other articles too tedious to mention. All adapted for the town and country."



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INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE Oklahoma	
COUNTY Cherokee	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER 70-6-35-0004	DATE 6/22/70

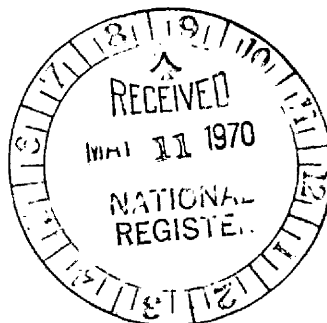
(Number all entries)

No. 8 Significance - 3

Murrell Home

"victory" was a hollow one. The fratricidal conflict involved the Cherokees, too. Rose Cottage, the home of Chief Ross, was burned to the ground. Murrell himself returned to Virginia to become a major in the Confederate army. His wife followed and some of her family lived in Hunter's Home during much of the war. Afterwards the Murrells never again used it. The house served as a school from 1880 to 1883.

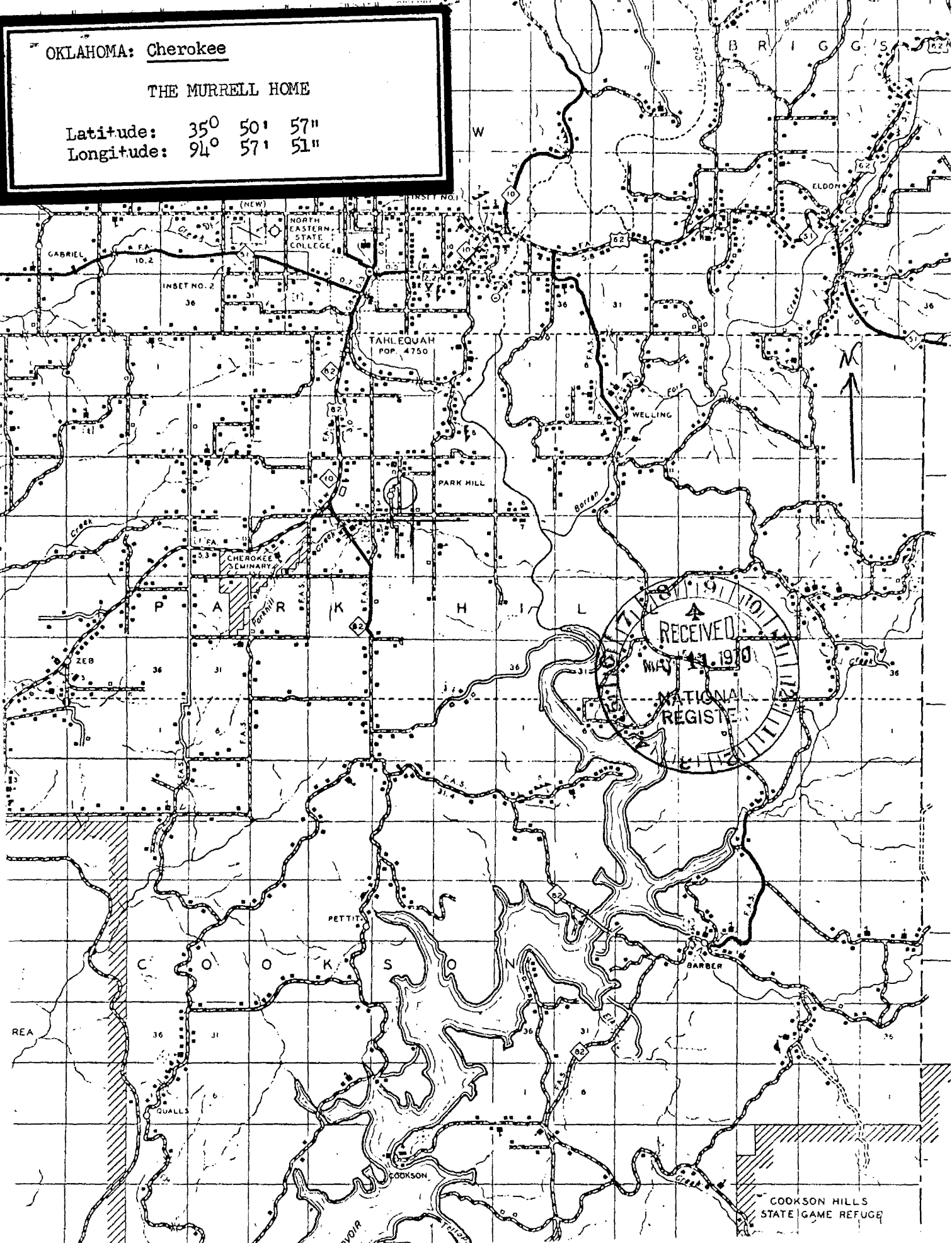
Park Hill could not recover its pre-war status as cultural center for the tribe. Destruction of the Female Seminary by fire in 1887 removed the town as a rival to growing Tahlequah to the north. Hunter's Home was purchased by the state in 1948. Today, handsomely restored and open daily as a museum, it stands as an impressive tribute to the graciousness of life in the Cherokee Nation in the pre-Civil War years and the last original symbol of the one-time importance of the town of Park Hill.



OKLAHOMA: Cherokee

THE MURRELL HOME

Latitude: 35° 50' 57"
Longitude: 94° 57' 51"



NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

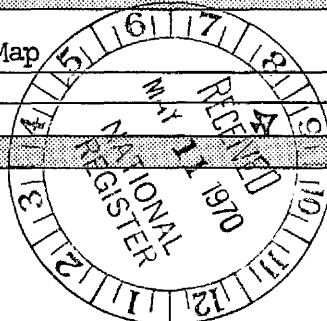
PROPERTY MAP FORM

(Type all entries - attach to or enclose with map)

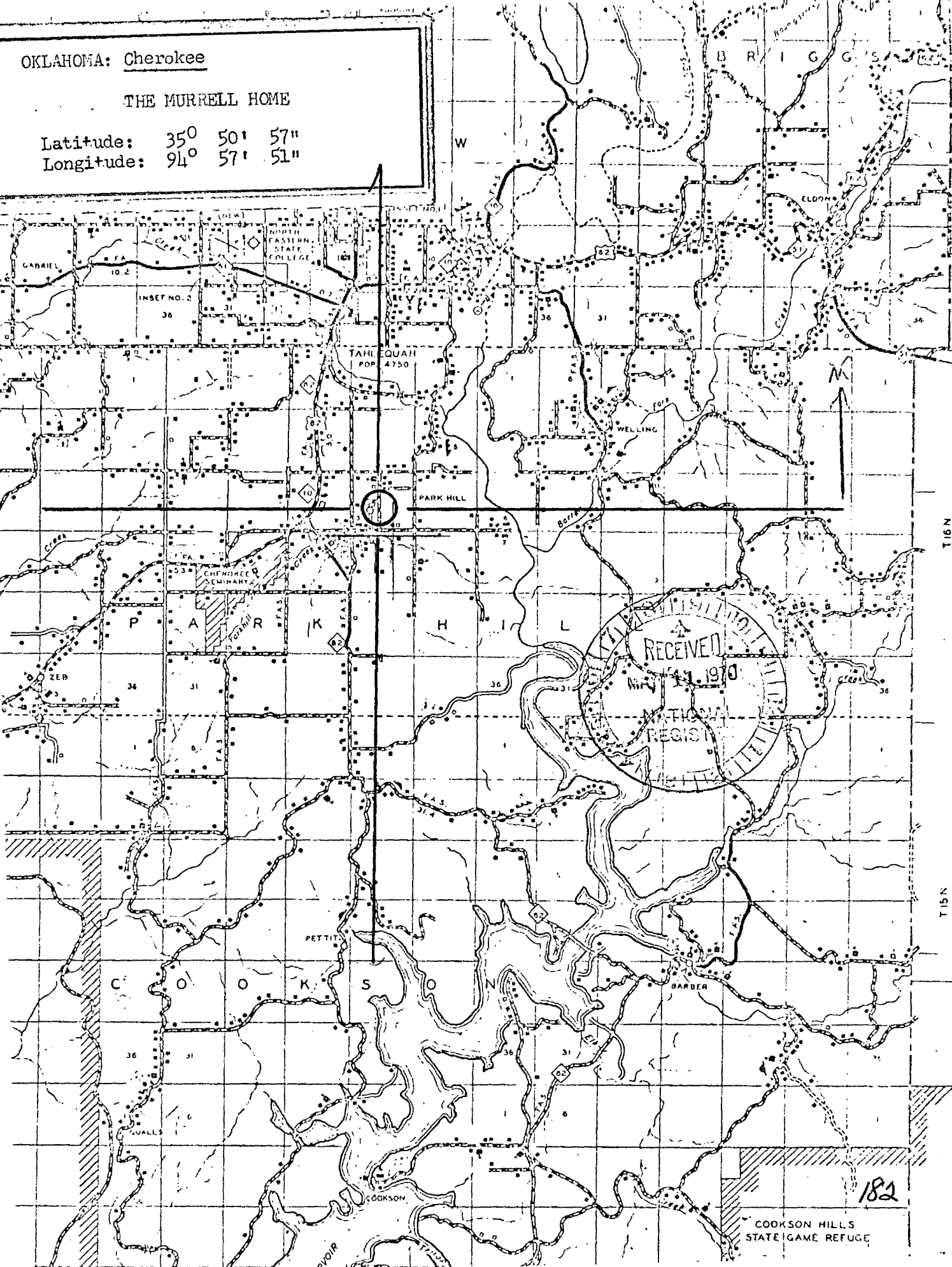
STATE Oklahoma	
COUNTY Cherokee	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER 70-6-35-000 4	DATE 6/22/70

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

1. NAME			
COMMON: Murrell Home			
AND/OR HISTORIC: Hunter's Home			
2. LOCATION			
STREET AND NUMBER:			
N/2 Sec. 22, T 16 N, R 22 E			
CITY OR TOWN:			
Park Hill (4 m. S of Tahlequah)			
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
Oklahoma	35	Cherokee	021
3. MAP REFERENCE			
SOURCE:			
Oklahoma Highway Department County Map			
SCALE: $\frac{1}{2}$ inch equals 1 mile			
DATE: 1949			
4. REQUIREMENTS			
TO BE INCLUDED ON ALL MAPS			
1. Property boundaries where required.			
2. North arrow.			
3. Latitude and longitude reference.			



Latitude: 35° 50' 57"
Longitude: 94° 57' 51"



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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PROPERTY MAP FORM

(Type all entries - attach to or enclose with map)

STATE Oklahoma	
COUNTY Cherokee	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

1. NAME			
COMMON:		Murrell House	
AND/OR HISTORIC:		Murrell House; Hunter's Home	
2. LOCATION			
STREET AND NUMBER:			
N/w Section 22, T 16 N, R 22 #			
CITY OR TOWN:			
Park Hill (4 miles south of Tahlequah)			
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
Oklahoma		Cherokee	
3. MAP REFERENCE			
SOURCE:			
U.S.G.S. MAP, Fort Smith, United States			
SCALE:			
1:250,000			
DATE:			
1967			
4. REQUIREMENTS			
TO BE INCLUDED ON ALL MAPS			
1. Property boundaries where required.			
2. North arrow.			
3. Latitude and longitude reference.			